

KCIS Connections

Kalamazoo Communities In Schools Newsletter

April 2009

Inside this issue:

Literacy Event Connects Hundreds of Students and Volunteers	2
A Note from State Farm	2
Upcoming Events	2
High School Success Starts in Middle School	3
Students Explore Editing Process	3
<i>Please Understand</i> Author Partners with KCIS	3
Focus: Friday Food Packs	3
Grant Awardees Announced	4
Welcome, Stryker!	4

From the Executive Director

by Pam Kingery

Kalamazoo Communities In Schools is focused on the well-being of the whole child. Children whose physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs are met will be more successful in school, will operate within the broad expectations of their communities, and will be stronger members of their families.

Among the concerns for all of us is the nation-wide increase in the incidence of childhood obesity. There is a strong possibility that, because of obesity and its secondary complications, many children will be less healthy as adults and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Further, it has been suggested that children today have a decreased capacity to engage constructively in imaginative “free play” without the structure of organized sports or close adult direction. In addition, many parents express concern about their children’s safety when playing outside. Whether the concern is real or perceived, the result is that safety issues have added to our children’s sedentary, “stay-in-the-house” tendencies.

KCIS is among many participants in a local initiative lead by the Kalamazoo Nature Center called “Leave No Child Inside,” based on Richard Louv’s book, called *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

This initiative has challenged all of us to look at what each of our organizations can do to “Leave No Child Inside” in Kalamazoo. We will all be seeing and hearing much more about this effort. In the meantime, regardless of your role and activities that involve children and youth, think creatively about how you can perform that role and carry out those activities outside. Read that book together outside. Instead of another 30-minute television show, how about a daily parent-child walk in the neighborhood. Shoot hoops. Kalamazoo is full of parks and trails, so try to explore one each month—Milham Park, Maple Glen, the Nature Center, the Kalamazoo extension of the Kal-Haven Trail, Crane Park, LaCrone Park, and many more.

Let’s leave no child inside in Kalamazoo, and while we’re at it, kick the adults outside with them!

Learn More About KCIS

Read...

As part of KCIS’ anticipated outcomes under the ISS model, KCIS strives to improve the reading, writing, arithmetic, attendance and behavior of KPS students.

What we’ve been reading lately:

Parents Schooled in Learning How to Help With Math
(for more information, visit www.edweek.org/go/scimath)

Ninth Grade, By the Numbers
(for more information, visit www.edweek.org/go/24tracking)

Visit...

Interested in learning more about KCIS, the Integrated Student Services model, or a specific KCIS program or school site?

The best way to learn can be in person—at the KCIS office or at one of our school sites. Ask questions, see the programs in action, and learn how KCIS is working to connect community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school and prepare for life.

Please contact Brooke Buys at bnbuys@kcis.us or at 337-1601 x209 to arrange a “lunch-n-learn” or school site visit.

April First Fridays: Dental Care Items



Spring Valley Center for Exploration first grade students Mackenzie Lesterhouse and Jacob Cooper

You can help the students of Kalamazoo Public Schools this month by donating new toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss.

Where to donate: Items can be donated at the KPS Administration Building (1220 Howard) or at the following Kalamazoo area National City branches: **Crosstown, Downtown, Gull Road, Oakland, West Main, Stadium, or Oshtemo.**

For more information, please visit the “Give to KCIS” section of our website (www.kcis.us), or contact Helen Walls at hwalls@kcis.us or 337-1601 x212.

Literacy Event Connects Hundreds of Students and Volunteers



Volunteer Emily Scott reads with Ben Raseman, a

During the months of February and March, KCIS brought the Bagels and Books literacy program to 7 elementary schools, connecting 607 children with 200 community volunteers to read books and eat bagels together. This highly successful program promotes student literacy and engages the community in a fun and rewarding way. This year, the program targeted 3rd, 4th and 5th graders in each of the schools.

The 2009 Bagels and Books program was made possible by **State Farm Insurance Company**. State Farm has now supported the Bagels and Books program for two years in a row. This year, there was also an increase in State Farm employees who volunteered to read with a child. In addition, a State Farm employee, Frances High, generously gave 40 hours of her time to assist KCIS in making this program possible. We are most grateful for Frances as she has coordinated volunteers, and managed the entire bagel and cream cheese operation for all involved in the program.

The **Rotary Literacy Project** was also a major factor in the success of this program. Rotary members gave more than one hundred books to KCIS. The Rotary Literacy Project gave an additional contribution that ensured that every child who participated was able to take a new book home with them. Many Rotarians also volunteered to read with children.

Special thanks also goes to Dean Hauck of the **Michigan News Agency** for her support in ordering books for this project. She set up a special Bagels and Books display area which made it very easy for people to purchase appropriate books for the right age levels.

Once again, the local bagel establishments outdid themselves in generous donations above and beyond those we bought. **Big Apple Bagels** at Westnedge and West Main, **Bagel Beanery**, and **Panera Breads** all shared their culinary abilities so that all volunteers and students were able to enjoy delicious bagels.

A Note From State Farm *by Angie Rinock, State Farm Insurance Company*



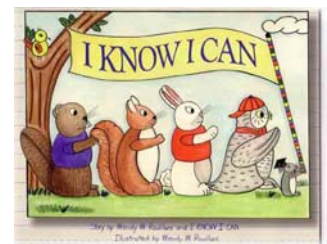
State Farm HERO representatives Lucy Robinson and Gloria Mireles present a check to Coco Cook, KCIS Director of Mentoring/Tutoring

State Farm Insurance and its associates partnered with KCIS for the last several years to provide needed funding and volunteer hours to programs. As a company, State Farm has granted over \$3,000 to KCIS programs, including Bagels and Books. The funding has helped KCIS purchase hundreds of new books for students in both English and Spanish languages. Over 50 State Farm associates from the Michigan office on Portage Road have volunteered their time to read books to area students.

In addition, an Employee Resource Group at State Farm called HERO (Hispanic Employee Resource Organization) provided additional funding this year to Bagels and Books through their own group fundraisers and by providing Spanish-speaking volunteers to read to students who speak Spanish. HERO acts as a resource in the Kalamazoo community to provide support for translation and cultural awareness and education initiatives. For the third year in a row, HERO has provided several \$500 scholarships to college students who are studying Spanish.

Upcoming Events **College Awareness Week: April 20-24**

This April, please dig out your college gear and join KCIS in celebrating college readiness. During the week, KCIS volunteers will visit 54 KPS second grade classrooms to read the book *I Know I Can*, a colorful tale about a group of animals preparing for college, aloud with students. After reading the story, students and volunteers discuss thoughts about going to college, The Kalamazoo Promise, and potential careers. At the end of the program, each student will receive his or her own copy of the book. To get involved, please contact Coco Cook at 337-1601 x218 or ccook@kcis.us



Engaging Parents with Positive Behavior & Literacy Supports: Friday March 1, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

A free workshop for those who work with families and youth, featuring Karen Childs, M.A., co-author of *Parenting with Positive Behavior Support*. The workshop will be held at KRESA (1819 Milham Road). Please RSVP to reserve a spot by contacting lhiga@kresa.org or 553-9310. For more information, please visit the "Parent Engagement" section (under "What We Do") of the KCIS website.

High School Success Starts in Middle School

Educators, policy makers, parents, and students increasingly recognize that in middle school, a combination of strong academic preparation, close monitoring, and good support is pivotal to high school success. Armed with this knowledge, Kalamazoo Communities In Schools has built a strong offering of support services at Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science, and Technology.

Top among those are an after-school program, funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Human Services, which allows students the opportunity to work on academics in engaging, creative ways.

One example of this is an archery program that was founded in order to engage students with math concepts in a fun and active way. "When students participated in the archery program, through Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation, students were calculating the mean, median, and mode of their arrow speed, along with figuring out angles in a real-life application," said Molly Appeldoorn, KCIS Site Coordinator at Milwood Magnet.

"It's easier to learn math when it's about something you like!" said Mathew Hartman, a sixth grade student at Milwood who participates in the program.

For more information about KCIS middle-school programming, please contact Eddie Anderson, KCIS Director of Integrated Student Services, at 337-1601 x203 or eanderson@kcis.us.

Students Explore Editing Process at KCIS Chase Publishing Centers

KCIS Chase Publishing Centers are now open in 7 KPS elementary schools. Nearly 600 students have edited, bound and illustrated their stories at the Publishing Centers, creating "published" books to be shared with fellow students, family members, and friends.

"My family loves my story and they love that I dedicated it to them," wrote a student at Spring Valley Elementary. "I loved that I had an opportunity to write the story."

"It was fun to fix up my story," wrote another student. "I'm sure my dad would be proud of my story."

The Publishing Centers are run by community volunteers. If you are interested in helping students engage with the process of editing, please consider signing up to volunteer! Volunteers are especially needed who can commit to working during the months of May and June, to cover vacancies created when WMU students graduate. Volunteers are also especially needed at Edison Environmental Science Academy.

For more information, please contact Coco Cook, KCIS Director of Mentoring/Tutoring, at 337-1601 x218 or ccook@kcis.us.

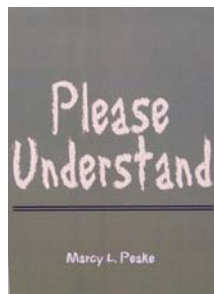
Focus: Friday Food Packs

Every Friday, volunteers and Site Coordinators at Milwood Elementary, Lincoln International Studies School, Spring Valley Elementary, and Edison Environmental Science Academy work together to coordinate the distribution of **food packs to 350 students** to ensure their nutritional needs are met during non-school hours.

KCIS believes that ensuring students have access to adequate nutrition outside of school gives them a better chance at successfully learning, staying in school and preparing for life.

The food packs are donated to the students thanks to the generosity of **Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes**.

Please Understand Author Partners with KCIS



Please Understand, a book by Marcy L. Peake, is now available for purchase through KCIS. The author will make a contribution to KCIS for each book purchased through our organization. **To purchase your copy today, please contact KCIS at 337-1601.**

The cost of the book is \$10 plus shipping and handling.

Please Understand takes the reader to a place not many are allowed to go—the secret thoughts of socially, emotionally and economically deprived children.

"After working with numerous children and families," said Peake, "I realized that I needed to figure out a way to raise awareness about the plight of children who are socially, emotionally and economically disadvantaged. My hope is that *Please Understand* will give insight into the lives of these children and inspire the community to advocate, serve and protect them."

Marcy L. Peake has counseled, advised and assisted young people and their families for the past 13 years. She has a master's degree in counseling and is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Michigan. Marcy has dedicated her professional career and volunteer activities to providing services, advocacy and support to those most in need—fragile and emotionally wounded young people.



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We're on the Web!

www.kcis.us

Grant Awardees Announced

KCIS is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008-09 Mini Grant awards. Mini Grants are open to KPS employees and provide funding to directly and actively involve students in creative and meaningful learning experiences. The funding is provided in order to complement major district and/or school improvement goals and broaden learning and involvement beyond the regular classroom curriculum.

Interested in learning more about any of these innovative projects? Check the KCIS website (www.kcis.us) to find spotlights on many of the projects in the coming months.

Promoting Technological Literacy in the English Language Arts Classroom

(Kalamazoo Central)

Authoring Personal Narratives based on a Shared Real World Experience

(Winchell Elementary)

Young Chefs Learn Math Objectives (Northeastern Elementary)

Researching Federal Agencies: IRS and Federal Court (Loy Norrix High School)

Increasing Tech for English Language Learners (Kalamazoo Central High School)

Behavioral and Attendance Incentives (Phoenix High School)

Manners of the Heart (Woods Lake Elementary)

Math and Manipulatives (Prairie Ridge Elementary)

VersaTiles Primary Library (Arcadia Elementary)

Real Money (Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary)

Four Flags of Michigan (El Sol Dual Language School)

Winter Reading Olympics (Hillside Middle School)

Friends Goodwill Sail (Milwood Elementary)

Family Literacy Night (Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary)

Researching the Holocaust (Loy Norrix High School)

KPS Drumming Project (KPS Elementary Schools)

Reading Buddies (Woodward Elementary)

Lansing Trip (Milwood Elementary)

Please check the May KCIS newsletter for information on the Jack Hamilton Memorial Grant recipient and the Clara Harbeck Grant recipients.

Welcome, Stryker!

Stryker will now be joining KCIS as a partner. The Craniomaxillofacial Division will become a host site for the **First Fridays** program.

First Fridays is a monthly donation drive to collect identified "high need" items to distribute across KCIS school sites. First Fridays was created to give the community easy ways to get involved in helping students succeed. By participating in this program, Stryker is helping KCIS address some of the most fundamental needs that can impact the ability of students to successfully learn and grow.

Additionally, the team at Stryker will be participating in a fun book drive competition to assist with the need for books for summer school programming.

Located in Portage, this division is excited to participate and give back to the children of KPS.

Thank you Stryker!

To learn more about Stryker's Craniomaxillofacial division, please visit their website at <http://www.stryker.com/en-us/products/Craniomaxillofacial/index.htm>